

# European Citizens' Initiative: Commission registers 'We are a welcoming Europe, let us help!' initiative

The European Commission has today decided to register a European Citizens' Initiative entitled 'We are a welcoming Europe, let us help!' which states: *"Governments are struggling to handle migration. Most of us want to help people in need because we care. Millions have stood up to help. Now we want to be heard. Let's reclaim a Welcoming Europe! We call upon the European Commission to act."* The organisers call on the Commission to *"support local groups that help refugees... stop governments punishing volunteers... defend victims of exploitation, crime and human rights abuses"* (see Annex).

The Commission's decision to register the Initiative concerns only the legal admissibility of the proposal. The Commission has not analysed the substance at this stage.

The registration of this Initiative will take place on 15 February 2018, starting a one-year process of collection of signatures of support by its organisers. Should the initiative receive one million statements of support within one year, from at least seven different Member States, the Commission will have to react within three months. The Commission can decide either to follow the request or not, and in both instances would be required to explain its reasoning.

## Background

European Citizens' Initiatives were introduced with the Lisbon Treaty and launched as an agenda-setting tool in the hands of citizens in April 2012, upon the entry into force of the European Citizens' Initiative Regulation which implements the Treaty provisions.

Once formally registered, a European Citizens' Initiative allows one million citizens from at least one quarter of EU Member States to invite the European Commission to propose a legal act in areas where the Commission has the power to do so.

The conditions for admissibility, as foreseen by the European Citizens' Initiative Regulation, are that the proposed action does not manifestly fall outside the framework of the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for a legal act, that it is not manifestly abusive, frivolous or vexatious and that it is not manifestly contrary to the values of the Union.

For more information

[ECIs currently collecting signatures](#)

[ECI website](#)

[ECI Regulation](#)

Annex – Description of the objectives of ‘We are a welcoming Europe, let us help!’

1. Citizens across Europe want to sponsor refugees to offer them a safe home and a new life. We want the Commission to offer direct support to local groups that help refugees who are granted national visas.

2. No one should be prosecuted or fined for offering humanitarian help or shelter. We want the Commission to stop those governments that are punishing volunteers.

3. Everyone has the right to justice. We want the Commission to guarantee more effective ways and rules to defend all victims of labour exploitation and crime across Europe and all victims of human rights abuses at our borders.